

a transfer device for transferring the belt structure towards the belt package assembly drum;

an extrusion apparatus for forming, in a substantially-continuous manner, a continuous tread sheet of rubber mixture;

means for conveying the continuous tread sheet of rubber mixture towards the belt package assembly drum; and

means for cutting the continuous tread sheet of rubber mixture in portions of predetermined length to obtain respective treads.

44. (new) The apparatus of claim 43, wherein the means for conveying the continuous tread sheet of rubber mixture is equipped with cooling means.--

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Preliminary Amendment together with an application under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b). After entry of this Preliminary Amendment, claims 1 and 23-44 are pending in this application.

In this Preliminary Amendment, Applicant adds a section heading and amends both a section subheading and the Abstract of the Disclosure. Additionally, Applicant adds claims to the right of priority and benefit. Further, Applicant cancels, without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 2-22, and adds new claims 23-44, which include the same subject matter as the original claims, to improve clarity. The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to the specification and Abstract of the Disclosure and the addition of new claims 23-44. No new matter was introduced.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for manufacturing a belt structure of a vehicle tire includes the steps of preparing a belt assembly, cutting the belt assembly to obtain first and second substantially-continuous belt strips, supplying the first and second belt strips to at least one assembly drum, and superposing on the at least one assembly drum portions of the first and second belt strips to obtain a belt structure comprising radially-superposed portions of the first and second belt strips. An apparatus for manufacturing the belt structure includes a first device for cutting a sheet of rubber-coated fabric to obtain a plurality of strips, a device for splicing the strips to form a belt assembly, a second device for cutting the belt assembly into belt strips, a third device for cutting the belt strips into portions of predetermined length, and at least one assembly drum.

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